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AMERICAN WOMEN IN THE PARIS SALON.

It cannot be claimed that our countrywomen in the ateliers of Paris have as yet shown any symptoms of "setting the world on fire" with their art. That they are indefatigably industrious, and fired by high ambitions and hopes, is an undoubted fact, but it is equally a fact that no feminine Michael Angelo or even Raphael has yet indicated or prophesied her own lofty destiny among them. The same may be said of our young countrymen in the various studios of Paris—infinitely easier as the way of artistic study is made for them—therefore why should we complain that our American "woman's work" has not yet distinguished itself, and only fairly holds its own among the artistic work of the year?

Viewing it as it appeared in the Paris Salon of 1882, one had to confess that it lacked vigor and originality, however tasteful and elegant it might be. It betrayed a monotony of skilful and docile, too docile, imitativeness. Those who ran might read in each picture whose was the master hand that directed its creation, even if not compelled to acknowledge it only a direct copy of that master. Our women showed themselves timid, and too prone to worship and servilely copy acknowledged talent. One felt moved to ask for them a measure of Michael-Angelesque insolence and audacity, leaving every other artistic gift for a later petition. Their whole exhibit had a timid, shrinking air, as if it found itself in a sudden vulgar glare from which it would willingly hide, or as if each individual picture realized the sensations of the modest fruit-seller who cried her wares in a weak voice and then exclaimed, "Goodness, I hope nobody heard me!"

Only eight or ten American women were represented at the Palais de l'Industrie last May. This counting excludes the five or six lady exhibitors who were born in the United States of foreign parents, and whose lives are passed in Europe. Proceeding through the galleries in alphabetical order, the first of our American woman artists whose work met the sight was Miss Sarah Dodson of Philadelphia. Her canvas was called "The Invocation of Moses," and both by position and character was the most conspicuous work of an "Americaine" in the exposition. In asking audacity for our women students we would make a mild exception of Miss Dodson. She does not need more than she has, and other artistic gifts would serve her talent better. The legend of her canvas is in Exodus: "And when Moses lifted his hands Israel was victorious." The three colossal figures seem to be wrestling together in some heavy, spiritless struggle, which involves legs and arms in almost the confusion of the Laocoon. They have the bold, large forms of the artist's master, Luminais, but are somewhat deficient in modelling and relief. In color they overdo Luminais's occasional tendency to opaqueness and have a gloomy sullenness all their own. The flesh is broken by a multiplicity of shadows scarcely accounted for by the weak, evenly diffused light of a dull, thunderous sky. It is what is called "strong work," although so unattractive, and it shows power in its painter, which with as much attention paid to the finesse of technique as she has now paid to the bolder features, will give her the place among artists to which her ambition evidently aspires.

Miss Elizabeth Gardner's work, "Daphnis and Chloe," was in altogether another language. No two objects on earth could be more unlike each other in every respect than these two pictures. Miss Gardner is *all* technique—nothing but technique one might almost say—and her picture was as faultlessly, painfully perfect as the work of her master Bouguereau, whose style hers so much resembles. But with all the elaborate perfection of technique, there was an almost repellent coldness about Miss Gardner's work. Her faces were expressionless, her attitudes and drapery savoring strongly of the Academies. A heatless atmosphere surrounded her figures, an atmosphere as of silver—or rather steel—in impalpable solution. No one could ever imagine sunshine palpitating through the world she paints, the real earthly sunshine in which flowers bloom and birds are stimulated to musical ecstasy. A golden shimmer, on the contrary, would shock her cold, bloodless people perhaps to death, certainly out of their classical correctness of pose and sculptural arrangement of raiment. In this canvas of "Daphnis and Chloe" the absolute perfection of the artist's skill manifested itself as for-

cibly in the clothes of her people as in their faces, presumably the seats of their souls; and neither light nor strength concentrated themselves to show in those faces a spiritual illumination which the best painted raiment in the world could not have. If Miss Gardner would only study nature more and Bouguereau less, then would her splendid painting grow warm and vital, with a magnetic attraction which it utterly lacks now.

Miss Anna Klumpke, of San Francisco, had "An Eccentric" skied high above a good many far less meritorious canvases. It was a woman's head in an eccentric red bonnet, and was as original in character as it was in artistic treatment. The wide hat border enshrouded the piquant brown face like the halo of a Florentine saint. The color was a clever play upon reds—red flowers upon a red hat, a bunch of red flowers at the red breast—the different shades never losing consciousness that their beauty lay in preserving the values and tone of the ensemble, not in arrogant self-assertion.

Miss Matilda Latz had a "Tête de Chien," a spirited portrait caught at one of the intense canine instants when a dog pulsates with excitement from ears to tail. The wag of the tail was *not* painted, but was most eloquently expressed, and the bark quite filled the air of the nervous spaniel's startled neighborhood.

Miss Winnaretta Singer, of New York, had the conventional artistic "Breton Interior" carefully and elaborately painted, showing sincere, straightforward effort unmingled with theories or vivid individual bias or propulsion. It was a gray interior, as all the American interiors seemed to be this year, instead of the rich browns of other years, and either because of its hanging or because of a defective plane of perspective drawing, had a curious up-hill look, as if its central figure might at any moment slip down out of the canvas.

Mrs. L. L. Williams, of Boston, called her picture of a girl pulling down branches of pink blossoms to meet the mouths of two leaping kids, "Trois Larrons." This was as purely decorative work as if it were tapestry. The decorative branches strayed all over a canvas which had neither aerial nor atmospheric effect, nor hint of space or distance, but only one flat plane, like high-art wall-paper. The sentiment was of the juvenile picture-book order; the drawing of the feet was highly amateurish, and one of the kids looked almost as knowing and intelligent as Holman Hunt's scapegoat. The picture was as perfectly inoffensive artistically as it was morally, and no other reason was evident for its existence.

Mrs. Emily Elias had the only landscape in the Salon painted by an "Americaine." It was a dreamy forest vision veiled in the slumbrous haze of a lotus-laden atmosphere, not strong but graceful, and of the tone of high art rather than of the color of nature. Miss Cornelia Conant, of New York, had a canvas called "In the Garden," and Miss Conger had one called a "Napolitan," but the most vigilant searching was ineffectual to bring them out from the hopeless "alphabetical confusion," so nothing can be said of their good or bad qualities.

It may be noticed that all but one of these ladies exhibited figure pictures. In no single instance, beside that of Miss Dodson, was any attempt made at composition or grouping. Miss Gardner's two figures were not grouped; they were simply posed in the stereotyped fashion of the "ateliers des dames." Miss Dodson's figures were grouped, and were vigorous in form even if somewhat spiritless in action; but she was the only one of our countrywomen who seemed to wrestle with other than the simplest forms of conventional, lady-like art. May the gods give our women-artists more audacity!

FOR the protection of Americans abroad, who are often shamelessly swindled in their purchases of paintings and other objects of art, we have made an arrangement in London with Messrs. Davis, the experts, of 147 New Bond Street, who will, for a small fee, pronounce on the genuineness of any articles submitted to them. We hope soon to announce the completion of similar arrangements with experts in Paris and other continental art centres. At no time, probably, have so many Americans abroad been imposed upon as during the past summer in the purchase of fraudulent "antiques," more especially in the matter of carved furniture.

The Note Book.

LONDON, July 31, 1882.



CURIOUS libel suit has been engaging the attention of society here lately. For some time it has been whispered in artistic circles that the sculptor, Mr. Richard Belt, who, for a young man, has had very remarkable success in obtaining important public and private commissions for statu-

ary, did not do the work entrusted to him, but employed what is known as a "sculptor's ghost" to finish what he had roughly begun. This report at length found its way into the columns of *Vanity Fair*, a weekly "society" journal, and the plaintiff now sues the proprietor for the sum of £10,000 damages. The following is the alleged libel:

"After leaving Mr. Lawes' studio in 1875 Mr. Belt began to do business on his own account. He published as his own work a statuette of Dean Stanley, of which a good deal has been lately heard. This statuette, however, was worked for him by Mr. Brock, as Mr. Brock himself declares. In like manner the memorial busts of Charles Kingsley and of Canon Conway, which also pass as the work of Mr. Belt, were in fact invested by Mr. Brock, as Mr. Brock himself declares, with whatever artistic merit they possess. Mr. Brock, equally with Mr. Lawes, declares that Mr. Belt was himself incapable of doing anything in the shape of artistic work. . . . Mr. Ver-Heyden states equally with Mr. Lawes and Mr. Brock that he was quite incapable of doing any artistic work whatever. . . . The point is that if our information is correct he has systematically and falsely claimed to be the author of the works for which he was only the broker, that he presents himself as a sculptor and an artist, when in reality he is but a statue jobber and a tradesman. If, then, the statements made to us are true—and we frankly avow that at present we fully believe them to be perfectly true—Mr. Belt has been guilty of a very scandalous imposture, and those who have admired and patronized him as a heaven-born genius are the victims of a monstrous deception."

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THE next libel complained of was in a letter written by the defendant in the following September, drawing the attention of the Lord Mayor, in reference to the competition for a memorial advertised for by the Corporation, to the statements made in *Vanity Fair*, which, the defendant alleges, remained uncontradicted, for the reason that no denial of the allegations could possibly be substantiated.

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THE testimony has been very contradictory. Mr. Belt has vigorously denied some strikingly circumstantial statements of various witnesses who have sworn that they did the work for which he has been paid and which he has claimed as his own. He has, in turn, put on the stand numerous persons for whom at different times he has executed commissions, and they declare that in many cases they have seen him do the work himself, and are satisfied that he is fully capable of doing whatever sculpture he may claim as his own. Mr. Belt's lawyers have proposed to settle the question of their client's proficiency by having an exhibition of his skill in open court. The presiding judge, Baron Huddleston, seemed immensely tickled with the idea, and at once consented to be the subject of the trial. It was justly urged by the other side that such an exhibition would prove very little, unless a jury of experts should pass upon the merit of the work. But the court has ordered that the experiment be made, and when the case comes up again in November, to which date it has been adjourned, there will be presented in the Queen's Bench the novel spectacle of a sculptor at work with clay, wet cloths, water, wires, wooden scrapers and pointers, and all the rest of the paraphernalia.

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SUCH a trial suggests some queer fancies. Suppose the sculptor insidiously flatters his subject. Will it influence the judge in his charge to the jury? Or suppose that, to make the likeness more striking, he exaggerates some characteristic feature of his honor's physiognomy, will his honor visit the offence upon him by leaning somewhat unduly on the side of the defendant? Judges are only mortals, and, like the rest of us, have their small weaknesses. Mr. Belt should carefully study those of Baron Huddleston. To insure a favorable verdict, too, he cannot afford to be indifferent to the artistic predilections of the gentlemen of the jury. The London bourgeoisie, he should remember, have peculiar

ideas of what constitutes beauty in works of sculpture. Scott tells us in "Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk," that when in Paris after Waterloo he pointed out the Venus de Medici to a Scotch soldier, who replied that it was not bad, but in his opinion was not nearly such a fine woman as a colossal beauty in marble eight feet high, of anything but artistic merit, to which he directed the author's attention. The average Londoner, in the same way, who admires the statue of the Griffin at Temple Bar and the equestrian effigy of the Duke of Wellington at the Marble Arch, would be unlikely to see the beauty of a portrait sketch in clay, no matter what its merit.

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THE precedent of such a public trial of skill is nevertheless interesting, and we may expect to find it followed in libel suits of a different kind. Mr. Boucicault, accused of stealing the plots of his plays, might be required to dash off an original five-act drama on a given subject, before the adjournment of the court. Sullivan, accused of "selling" a prize-fight, might be called upon to vindicate himself, in a ring extemporized before the jury-box, and demonstrate to the gentlemen there his inability to withstand the onslaught of a more muscular assailant. Rowell might prove that it was himself who won a recent walking match and not some one personating him, as libelously alleged in *The Sporting Slasher*, or show at least his ability to perform the feat, by having a track laid down around the court room and making the required number of "laps" in the presence of the jury.

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IT is well known that artists do not always make use of paid and professional models. Thus many beautiful faces and elegant figures come to be sold in the public art marts of the world whose originals would be insulted by too observant glances. In Hennessy's beautiful "En Fête," now in the Royal Academy, one of the pretty "paysannes" is an American lady, a story writer for the American magazines, while "la petite paysanne" disentangling herself from a brier is a young artist of Fourteenth Street, New York, as she was not many years ago. In Eugene Benson's "Banquet in Titian's House," now in the Royal Academy, and destined, I believe, eventually for America, the elegant figure turned back to the spectator is an excellent likeness of Miss Fletcher—"George Fleming"—author of "Mirage" and "Kismet."

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SOME artists grow monotonously mannered in their use of favorite models. Du Maurier, for example, has two models hired regularly by the year who serve every requirement of his social satires. Except for Du Maurier's wonderful "chic," which enables him to introduce expressions "out of his own head," and not found in his hired models, he could not safely do such a thing. Albert Moore's monotony of model is becoming distinctly perceptible. In his limp "Dreamers," all in an "æsthetic heap and decorative row" this year in the Royal Academy, the dreamers were, every three of them, the self-same dreamers, as well as the self-same limp decorative maidens, called "Acacias" at the Grosvenor. In this year's "Dreamers" the artist has introduced bodily, without the slightest alteration of color, pose, or expression, one of his panels of last year or the year before, then called "Daffodils," "Asphodels," or something of that sort.

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IN Burne Jones's "Golden Stairs," the same identical maiden winds numerously down and round her circling way, while this year she bursts out of a split tree trunk as "Phyllis," and also dances "severally" in "The Mills."

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How fashionable is art! Behold how it invades the high places of the world! This year in the Paris Salon several courtesans exhibited under their own names, while several other ladies of high degree beside "Madame Henriette Brown," did so under assumed ones. In the Grosvenor this year appeared one ducal exhibitor, one serene highness, and one princess of the reigning house. Also as lesser aristocratic lights appeared Lady Louisa Charteris, Sir John Leslie, Sir Coutts Lindsay, Lady Lindsay, and Louise, Marchioness of Waterford. The Duke of Argyle's landscape was the poorest of amateur work. H.S.H. Count Gleichen's bust of Admiral Keppel was strong enough

to have come from any noted studio, while the "Portrait" contributed by the Princess Louise was thoroughly vigorous and excellent. MONTEZUMA.

LONDON, Aug. 5, 1882.

THE Academy has closed, and the Grosvenor has closed: neither has this year made a sharp clean impression on the page of time. If people ask each other, as people rather vaguely do, after going to the Academy, "Which did you think the best picture?" the reply is generally hesitating and plural. No one canvas took the public eye by storm on the opening; nor has any one work ripened into a reputation before the close. As for the Grosvenor, it was admittedly poor.

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THE emotion of the day in the art world is a sentiment of admiration for the just dead painter and poet, Dante Gabriel Rossetti. This is the Anglo-Italian pre-Raphaelite who never exhibited, and attained by so not doing a "succès de curiosité" equal or more to that which he might have obtained by exhibiting. There is little reason, however, to suppose that Rossetti's abstinence from publicity was motivated by a desire to attain notoriety in an indirect way: he had, no doubt, a real shrinking from submitting his work to the vulgar. His name will always be surrounded with a poetical halo: it is already taking shape. There was an enthusiastic gathering at the sale of his effects in Cheyne Walk, where, like Carlyle, he lived in one of the old-fashioned houses which have lately become again the fashion with us; and prices much higher than intrinsic values were paid.

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A VISITOR to the house on the day of the "private view" would not, unless predisposed by sentiment, have seen much to prompt him to Rossetti worship. Truth to say, the house was dirty, and the garden full of weeds: the bric-à-brac was of the nature of studio properties, not chosen as furniture for a home; and of decoration, in the modern æsthetic sense, the walls bore no trace. Such of the furniture as was not of the Wardour Street class might have come from Tottenham Court Road. Rossetti, in truth, cared nothing for art as a matter of everyday modern life: he lived in the past, and took little pains to influence the present. In this respect he differed greatly from William Morris, our other poet-artist, who, though he loves and admires the past, designs and sells wall papers and carpets for the present. The deceased painter neglected his garden in Cheyne Walk; and in connection with this fact, an attempt has been made by an injudicious admirer to erect the love of weeds into an article of the æsthetic creed. The sentiment of admiration for Rossetti will hardly suffice, however, to carry a dandelion and thistle movement. The latter days of the painter poet had their sad aspect. Rossetti, it may be said, died of sleeplessness, and of the remedy he took to induce sleep, the by no means innoxious chloral.

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WE get now and then in London a glimpse of what you are doing in the arts. I do not allude so much to exhibitions of pictures by American painters from the French Salon, such as that which our Fine Art Society has just opened: this is, at least as much French in spirit as American. More properly American was the little collection of Low tiles which was lately shown by Mr. Lowell in Bond Street. This attracted some attention, expectation having been raised in advance by a notice of this feature which was extracted some time previously from one of your journals. Actual inspection has led us in London to the judgment that the Low tiles are very good indeed; but not better than English work of the same kind, as they have been said to be, nor having any element essentially novel. Of those steel-plate cards, for ball programmes, menus, and Christmas salutation, which you sent us two or three years back, the superiority and novelty have been generally admitted on our side.

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WOULD you forgive me if, in reference to the Low tiles and the claims which preceded them, I were to say that we find fault here with a certain tendency which we think there is to boasting on your side the great water? In commerce this is tolerable, and per-

haps not more prevalent with you than with us; but it jars with art. Anxiety to show that, while you excel us, as we admit, in many of the more businesslike qualities, you are as good as the old country in everything, is natural; but when it takes the form of mere assertion of equality or superiority, it hinders the growth of your reputation rather than promotes it; especially if we find, on inspecting the examples you show us, that they do not really excel what we and the other older nations are doing.

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AT the same time I am sure I may truly add that we are desirous of seeing more of your work; and that a comprehensive exhibition in London of your pottery, your Cincinnati wood carving, and your pictures—other than those conceived and born in Paris—would be both interesting to English circles and successful. We are not unprepared to find that, in time, you may send us many things equal in workmanship to our best, and superior in freshness, in so far as you may succeed in embodying in your art a local spirit. By "local" I do not mean—as we should read the word here—provincial and restricted; I use it in a sense proportionate to the scale of your continent.

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BY selections at the great Hamilton sale, by which an embarrassed Duke disperses his art treasures to pay his debts, the British National Gallery has, we all agree, been greatly and judiciously reinforced. Keeping well within the grant assigned by the Treasury, Mr. Burton has made thirteen purchases, against none of which have I seen exception taken. The one great acquisition is the Assumption of the Virgin, by Sandro Botticelli, for which the price given was £4777 10s. Religion was a realized thing when an Italian painter could draw a landscape of the valley of the Arno, a scene as familiar to his public as the Thames from Richmond Hill would be to the Londoner of to-day, cut a hole in the sky—so to speak—and paint in a grand heavenly ceremonial, full of angels, prophets, saints, and glory. Such is the plan of the picture, which is equally great in conception and execution.

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FOR the National Gallery of Dublin Mr. Doyle did well: he never does otherwise, they say; for the National Portrait Gallery Mr. Scharf laid out £2520 in securing—after a contest with the French Government agent—a large historical portrait piece, the council of English and Spanish royal commissioners assembled at (old) Somerset House in 1604. Private buyers, according to general judgment, have not always kept their heads as cool as the official agents. This was the case most especially toward the end of the sale, and in regard to the miniatures: many of these, as well as some of the pictures, will never fetch the same sums again. From your side of the world Mr. Arnot contributed considerably to run up prices; and it is calculated that our Mr. Beckett Denison must have spent, chiefly in bric-à-brac, something more than £70,000! The important pieces of furniture have gone, nearly all, to a few well known rich collectors, including the Rothschilds and Sir Richard Wallace.

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IN the most advanced circles here, you may like to be informed, Dickens is considered obsolete: his well-known colleague and illustrator, the artist Hablot K. Browne, who has just died, was certainly so. "Phiz" had been forgotten for many years, and died, it is hinted, a pensioner of some charitable association.

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WHY he should thus have gone completely out of notice it is hard to say. Perhaps it is that the comic draughtsman, dealing with the most changeable aspects of life, gets unintelligible as soon as these have passed into a new phase. It might be thought that an illustrating artist would follow these phases. But "Phiz" had no such facility. Nor was he a man of original power: except in connection with letterpress he could do little. On the other hand he had a singular faculty for entering into the mind of his author, absorbing the spirit of the text he had to illustrate, and reproducing it pictorially. And this he could do not only with the humor but also with the pathos. Dickens and he were thus almost completely complementary.

JOHN CROWDY.